













SUGAR ACT BLUE BOOK.

The controversy about the Indian Sugar Duties Act is just entering upon the acute stage. The long-expected Blue Book has been issued this week...

Let me first endeavour to give you a brief summary of this interesting Blue Book. It opens with a despatch from the Government of India, dated 5th May 1898...

You will not be surprised if these words of the late Viceroy, which were written in response to a proposal that India should be represented at the International Conference held in Brussels last year...

In the meantime, however, other influences were at work. The masterful Colonial Secretary appears upon the scene, and it is quite clear from the subsequent correspondence that he has played no inconsiderable part in the initiation of the recent legislation...

The Mauritius sugar growers had been at him, and we read in the despatch from Lord George Hamilton, dated 25th August 1898, that letters from Mauritius urge that India should take steps to protect her own sugar and Mauritius cane sugar...

Lord George Hamilton had a very determining voice in these counsels is, perhaps, open to doubt. Be that as it may, as soon as the new Viceroy was comfortably installed in his new office, the negotiations were resumed by a despatch from Lord George Hamilton, dated 26th January 1899...

The Blue Book was issued on Tuesday. The same evening Mr. Maclean asked Lord George Hamilton whether he was in a position to redeem the promise made before Easter, that they might have a day for the discussion of the papers...

Lord George Hamilton—What I told my hon. friend was that he had better asked the First Lord of the Treasury. I can assure my hon. friend that I should be delighted to discuss the question.

Mr. Maclean's parting thrust was—"Will the noble Lord communicate with the first Lord; he has much more influence with him than I have?" The House laughed, and the matter was dropped.

one reads the messages of Mr. Secretary Chamberlain to the India Office one is forced to come to the conclusion that the interests of the people of India are not by any means "chiefly and primarily" uppermost in the Colonial Secretary's calculating mind.

Then follows Lord Curzon's first despatch (27th January) and particulars of the interchange of views between the Government of India and the various provincial administrations. Thenceforth, events begin to move much more rapidly, and telegrams take the place of mailed despatches.

So the reply comes back over the wires the next day—"Propose to legislate at once on American model." Four days later the Indian Secretary is putting the screw on again—"Suggested legislation approved by Her Majesty's Government."

Curzon to Hamilton (March 11th)—"When will it be passed?" Hamilton to Curzon (March 14th)—"Hope to pass Bill on 20th March."

Curzon to Hamilton (March 20th)—"Bill passed Council to-day. Comes into force at once." I confess that I do not quite see how Lord George Hamilton or Mr. Chamberlain will be able to justify the extraordinary haste with which this measure has been passed into law.

The House of Commons ought to resent the attempt which has been made to pass a far-reaching measure of this character without submitting it to the assembly which is responsible, in the long run, for the good government of India.

The incident, which I am about to relate, would evidently appear to be one unique of its kind and would go to speak much in favour of the whole canine species.

It happened in my younger days when I was one of the early rangers in the village. One day at dawn I went out for a stroll in the northern direction. In my way lay a rather jungly tract where there was no human habitation.

A good climber, I went up a big mangrove tree which stood close by to look about from the top. The spectacle that burst on my view was, indeed, exciting. Noiselessly did I descend and advance to witness more distinctly what I had only caught a glimpse of.

harm's way. Now to my astonished gaze was vividly presented the scene of a battle between two armies—one of dogs and the other of jackals.

To my surprise I found there two of our own pets which used to guard our house at night. On one side of the path, were collected about two dozens of dogs and on the other about a hundred and fifty jackals.

Why, before this they had no experience of such an improbability as an attack on them en masse by jackals. The rule was that whenever any of them had chanced to pursue a jackal it fled precipitately, only looking back at times to see that it was not outstripped and made mincemeat of.

A fresh attempt was shortly made by the dogs with the same result. I counted and marked the dogs and found that all the village dogs were there, so that there was no hope of their getting any help from a "Reserve force."

Original. A BATTLE ROYAL. The story which "G" contributed to Saturday's issue of the Patrika, though testifying to the presence of humour in dogs, is after all common-place...

INDIA AND THE FAR EAST IN PARLIAMENT. HOUSE OF COMMONS. INDIAN RAILWAY EXTENSION. Sir John Leng asked the Secretary of State for India: What is the estimated total amount proposed to be contributed towards railway extension by the independent States of India during the current year...

Mr. Herbert Roberts asked the Secretary of State for India whether his attention had been drawn to the following recent cases: the case of Empress v Mharaja and another, in which the defendants were convicted of theft and sentenced to three months imprisonment...

And, whether, in view of these facts, he would consider the desirability of introducing a change in the present system of criminal administration in India; by which the district magistrate was the head of the police, the virtual prosecutor, and at the same time the chief magistrate in his district.

ALL is quiet on the Chamkani border, and there appears little prospect of further trouble, but the Chamkannis are not bringing in the promised balance of their rifles yet. They continue quarrelling over the distribution of their fires, and several leading Khan Khels have been killed within the last few days in fights which constantly occur among themselves.

member's question. I do not think that the orders of the High Court so far as their terms are stated in the question, would justify me in requesting the Government of India to consider the advisability of introducing a revolutionary change in the present system of criminal administration in India.

THE RULE OF PRIMOGENITURE IN SUCCESSION TO NATIVE ESTATES.—Mr. Kimber asked the Secretary of State for India whether many important petitions have been presented to the Punjab authorities from loyal Sardars of the Cis-Sutlej territory of the Punjab, praying for relief from uncertainty and for recognition by Government of the rule of primogeniture in the succession to their respective estates; whether there has been any delay or want of uniformity on the part of local officials in reporting on dealing with such petitions; and whether he has any objection to grant a return of the dates, names of subscribers, and prayers of such petitions, and of the official correspondence and rulings of the Government of India and Punjab authorities in respect of the subject.

THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN ARRANGEMENT IN CHINA.—The following is the text of the Identical Notes exchanged between the United Kingdom and Russia with regard to their respective railway interests in China. The Notes are issued as a Parliamentary Paper (Treaty Series), a copy of which was laid on the table of the House of Commons on Friday night.

Great Britain and Russia, animated by a sincere desire to avoid in China all cause of conflict on questions where their interests meet, and taking into consideration the economic and geographical gravitations of certain parts of that Empire, have agreed as follows:— 1. Great Britain engages not to seek for her own account, or on behalf of British subject or of others, any railway concessions to the North of the Great Wall of China, and not to obstruct, directly or indirectly, applications for railway concessions in that region supported by the British Government.

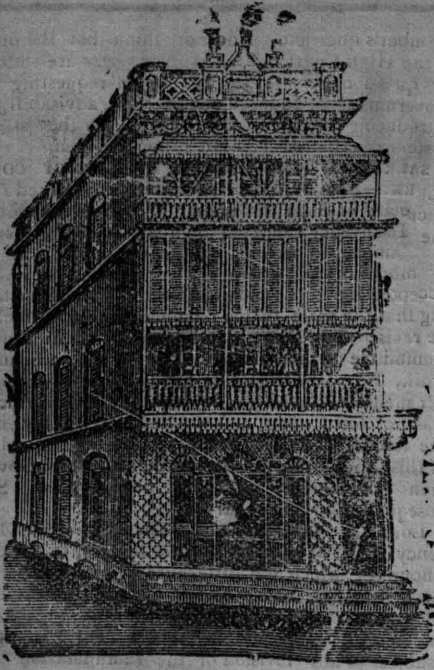
Russia, on her part, engages not to seek for her own account, or on behalf of Russian subject or of others, any railway concessions on the basin of the Yang-tse, and not to obstruct, directly or indirectly, applications for railway concessions in that region supported by the British Government.

The two contracting parties, having nowise in view to infringe in any way the sovereign right of China on existing treaties, will not fail to communicate to the Chinese Government the present arrangement, which, by averting all cause of complications between them, is of a nature to consolidate peace in the Far East, and to serve the primordial interests of China herself.

The Russian Note to Sir Charles Scott, signed by Count Muravieff, "duly authorised to the effect," is identical in terms with that of the British Note, the only difference being that paragraphs 1 and 2 are there in simply transposed.

The second Identical Note, subscribed to by both the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg and Count Muravieff, the Russian Minister, is an addendum to the other, and is in the following terms:— In order to complete the Notes exchanged this day respecting the partition of spheres for concessions for the construction and working of railways in China, it has been agreed to record in the present additional Note the agreement arrived at with regard to the line Shanghai-Kanun-Nen-Chwang, for the construction of which a loan has been already contracted by the Chinese Government with the Shanghai Hong Kong Bank, acting on behalf of the British and Chinese Corporation.

The general arrangement established by the above mentioned Notes is not to infringe in any way the rights acquired under the said Loan Contract, and the Chinese Government is at liberty to appoint both an English engineer and a European accountant to supervise the construction of the line in question and the expenditure of the money appropriated to it. But it remains well understood that this fact cannot be taken as constituting a right of property or foreign control, and that the line in question is to remain a Chinese line, subject to the control of the Chinese Government, and cannot be mortgaged or alienated to a non-Chinese company.



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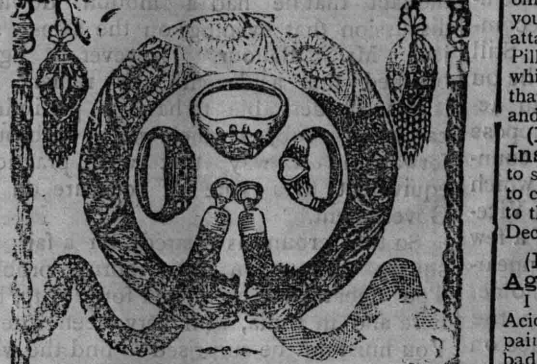
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